

## **Connecting Care – Empowering The Patient Through Their Waiting Experience**

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Waiting at a hospital is a challenge for patients and their families. Many individuals go to the hospital, waiting for hours to receive their tests and results. This waiting experience places a burden on individuals and causes stress in a tense time in their lives.

This research was a partnership between healthcare providers and graduate program of Design Thinking and Leadership, Department of Visual Communication Design, Herron School of Art and Design. The goal of this people-centered research was to examine and enhance the patient waiting experience at the Registration, Lab and Radiology service areas of a Carmel Hospital.

To understand the patient experiences, we approached the project utilizing people-centered design methods. The design research team conducted ethnographic observations and interviews involving patients and staff within the Laboratory, Registration, and Radiology spaces at a hospital. In responding to defined problems within these spaces, the design team identified the desirable patient communication flow and developed an integrative communication system that aligned with the touch points of the patient journey. This communication system included wrist bands, digital message boards, an expanded pager system, as well as redesigned interior spaces.

The two major findings from the research were: One, current communication levels between provider staff and patients resulted in negative patient perceptions of the service. Two, patients wanted more integrated ways to maintain communication between service providers and themselves. From these findings, it was recommended that service providers adapt a more integrated communication system to deliver an optimal patient experience.